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SOCIALIZATION AND VOLUNTEERS: A TRAINING PROGRAM FOR  
VOLUNTEER MANAGERS AT NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

By

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B.A., The University of Montana, Missoula, 2013

Professional Paper

presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

in Humanities and Sciences, Communication Studies

The University of Montana

Missoula, MT

Spring 2015

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Socialization, Identification and Volunteers: A Training Program for Volunteers at  
Nonprofit Organizations

Chairperson: Dr. Betsy Bach

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The purpose of this project was to construct a training program for volunteer managers in nonprofit organizations that will aim to increase the retention of volunteers through better socialization practices. The training was developed using Beebe, Mottet, and Roach's (2013) Needs-Centered Training Model, and volunteer manager and volunteer focus groups served as the needs assessment. The main topics that arose from the needs assessment included fostering a positive and supportive volunteer relational environment, helping volunteers see that they are needed, useful, and making an impact, and clearly communicating volunteer expectations. The need for better volunteer socialization can be seen from the retention rates of volunteers, which nationally, range from half to three quarters after the first year, although this project does not address all of the elements that contribute to volunteers intention to remain, such as satisfaction, motivation and expectations, it encourages improving the socialization practices of nonprofit organizations. Providing better socialization approaches for nonprofit organizations can better equip volunteer managers to increase their volunteer retention rates.

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## **Introduction**

Approximately 25% of Americans volunteer annually (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011). This means that roughly 64.5 million individuals comprise the volunteer workforce (National & Community Service, 2012). According to the National Center for Charitable Statistics, as of 2012, there are more than 1.4 million nonprofit organizations in the United States (NCCS, 2012). Taylor, Mallinson, and Bloch (2008) say that “organizations rely on volunteers to effectively pursue or meet their charge or mission, and without them, many organizations would not survive” (p. 390). Volunteers not only offer job support to nonprofit organizations, but also save nonprofits billions of dollars by eliminating the need to pay full time employees (Finkelstein, 2008). In fact, volunteers contribute, in hours, “the equivalent of 10.5 million full-time employees”(Smith, 2001, p. 20). The number of individuals willing to give of their time and talents to the nonprofit sector, without monetary compensation, warrants a closer look, specifically, a closer look at the socialization practices of nonprofit organizations.

Organizational socialization can be understood in the following way. Deeper commitment to an organization often occurs when individuals build their identities in such a way that their jobs become part of how they define themselves (Cheney, 1983). This means that the job is no longer simply a job; it is a part of the individual. The way in which organizations communicate their culture is typically the way newcomers experience the process of socialization, and possibly deeper commitment, within an organization. In the past, research has indicated that organizations with socialization programs are able to help newcomers adjust to their new roles and increase their organizational commitment (Hart, Miller & Johnson, 2003).

Nonprofit organizations have much to benefit from volunteers who have been well socialized into an organization. This is especially relevant considering how many nonprofit organizations integrate numerous volunteers into their programs each year. Investigating socialization processes, or lack thereof could reveal key elements to the integration and increased commitment of volunteers in nonprofit organizations. Nonprofit organizations could benefit from a training manual that would guide the organization towards successful socialization of volunteers.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Volunteers are a key element to nonprofit organizations, thus making research on volunteers important. However, for many nonprofit organizations, recruiting the volunteers is not the issue, but retaining them is (Mayer, 1999). According to National and Community Service data, volunteer retention by state ranged from 53.9% to 80.3%, between the years 2010 and 2012. This translates to nonprofit organizations across America retaining only half or three quarters of their volunteer workforce each year. Recruiting, screening, training, and general management of volunteers is not free. For example, Public/Private Ventures estimates that the average infrastructure cost per volunteer is \$300 per year (2002). This means that nonprofit organizations that are only retaining half to three quarters of their volunteers are not only losing valuable help, they are also losing money.

Conversely, if the managing of volunteers can be improved and more volunteers retained, nonprofit organizations will benefit financially from the value of unpaid workers who stay. Hager and Brudney (2004) say that, “the prevailing wisdom is that

unless organizations pay attention to issues of volunteer management, they will not do a good job of recruiting, satisfying, and retaining volunteers” (p. 2).

It is evident through the aforementioned statistics and information that nonprofit organizations would benefit from improving their volunteer management and integration methods. Furthermore, the literature is lacking in regards to the discussion of how nonprofit organizations socialize, and consequently, retain volunteers. While there is a lot of research done on nonprofit organizations, and employee socialization, Jordan (2010) states “volunteers have not been a prominent sample in studies examining organization socialization” (p. 7). There also exists a need for training programs that can be implemented in nonprofit organizations that will work towards achieving higher volunteer retention rates (Kummerfeldt, 2011). Findings from this project may help to develop a training plan that would increase the retention of volunteers at nonprofit organizations.

### **Purpose of this Paper**

The purpose of this professional paper is to examine the factors that contribute to volunteer socialization and then to develop a training plan that helps nonprofit organizations effectively socialize their volunteers, with the hope of increasing retention rates. The intent is to increase the understanding of how nonprofit organizations can contribute to their own retention rates. First, a review of the literature concerning socialization, and volunteers and socialization is necessary to the foundation of the proposed research.

## **Chapter One: Literature Review**

Prior to examining literature concerning socialization and volunteers and nonprofit organizations, a definition of volunteering is offered. Ellis and Campbell (2005) define volunteering as the choice “to act in recognition of a need, with an attitude of social responsibility and without concern for monetary profit, going beyond one’s basic obligations” (p. 4). With this understanding of volunteering in mind, an exploration of the literature concerning socialization follows.

### **Socialization**

Socialization is the process in which an individual who is new to an organization learns how the organization works. The idea of organizational socialization, and the literature surrounding it, dates back almost forty years. Van Maanen (1978) explains organization socialization as “the manner in which the experiences of people learning the ropes of a new organization position, status, or role are structured for them by others within the organization” (p. 19). Pascale (1985) offers another definition of socialization as “the process of being made a member of the group, learning the ropes, and being taught how one must communicate and interact to get things done” (p. 27). Socialization being seen as a “process” has been noted by many scholars. For example, Bullis and Bach (1989) argue that “scholars have often adopted stage models in order to conceptualize the socialization process as it takes place over time” (p. 274).

Jablin (1985) takes a communication perspective on socialization and found that the more individuals understand their roles within an organization, and how to communicate about those roles, the more satisfied the individuals are with their jobs. An

understanding of organizational roles is helpful because how well a newcomer has adapted to his or her role is an indicator of socialization. Levinson (1964) explains that “theory and research on organizational roles must consider relationships among at least the following sets of characteristics; structurally given role-demands and opportunities, personal role-definition (including conceptions and performance), and personality in its role-related aspects” (p. 178). Organizational roles are not just the formal job position given to the newcomer; they are also how the individual structures his or her way of fitting into the organization, and/or the social setting of the organization (Levinson, 1964).

Communicating with other individuals within an organization is key for newcomers who are learning their organizational roles, as well as learning organizational history, language, politics, people, goals, values, and performance proficiency (Chao, O’Leary-Kelly, Wolf, & Klein, 1994). Cooper-Tomas and Anderson (2002) found that British Army recruits expressed more positive feelings about their organization because of an intensive socialization process, which was experienced during their first eight weeks of training where emphasis was on learning skills, associated with their new organizational roles.

It is important that recruiters, managers, and the individuals responsible for new employees or volunteers understand the value of socialization and its purpose. Van Maanen (1976) explains, “the purpose of socialization is to provide an individual with knowledge, ability, and motivation to play a defined role” (p. 70). The importance of socialization is key within the first month of working at a new organization and research indicates that an individual’s socialization success, meaning how well an individual is

adapting to his or her role, can be predicted within the first month of being at a new organization (Major, Kozlowski, Chao, & Garnere, 1995). Figuring out if an individual has been socialized to an organization is also key knowledge for organizations.

Myers and Oetzel (2003) found six dimensions that reveal if individuals have been socialized into an organization or not. Those six dimensions include, familiarity with supervisors, organizational acculturation, recognition, involvement, job competency, and role negotiation. The researchers found that the participants in the study who reported that they got to know their supervisor also reported changed feelings towards the organization. They also explain, “when members are acculturated, they have accepted the organization’s culture and are willing to make personal changes in order to integrate into it” (Myers & Oetzel, 2003, p. 449).

The third factor, recognition, occurs when a newcomer is able to see his or her value to the organization and a feeling of recognition by supervisors is felt. Fourth, participants described involvement in various organizational activities and duties as being key to their “assimilation” into the organization. The researchers discovered that “early involvement also translated to higher levels of productivity” (p. 449). Job competency was the fifth factor and had to do with newcomers believing that they had the ability to perform their duties. The sixth and final factor the researchers identified, role negotiation, was found to have to do with the ways newcomers to an organization interacted with others to figure out how differing roles should be acted out (Myers & Oetzel, 2003).

According to Myers and Oetzel (2003), once an individual has an understanding of these dimensions, s/he can be considered socialized into the organization and have

incorporated the organization's values into his/her professional, or in this case, volunteer life. Once an individual is considered socialized into an organization, the end goal is that individuals would identify with the organization (Jablin, 1986). Myers and Oetzel offer, "although each dimension in itself provides valuable information, the full index can more efficiently offer data to organizations about success or inadequacies of new member development programs" (p. 450). This means that one possible way to measure the success of newcomer socialization is by utilizing their Organizational Assimilation Index. Furthermore, it is important to understand how the socialization process can end with individuals building their identities with the organization.

Identification is a key step in the socialization process (Jablin, 1986). It has been seen through different studies that individuals form their identities, and define who they are, through the various organizations or "groups" of which they are a part. These can include, social, workgroup, and cultural associations (Collinson, 2003; Tracy & Trethewey, 2005). For example, Collinson (2003) describes "careerism" as a preoccupation with the identity of having a "successful" career. He states that "careerism can be seen in the way that aspiring individuals come to treat all organizational, social and even personal relations as instrumental to career progress" (p. 537). Furthermore, Tracy and Trethewey (2005) specifically state that, "scholarship increasingly indicates that individuals form their identities based on organizational and workgroups as much or more than on home lives or traditional categories such as race, gender, age, ethnicity, or nationality" (p. 169). Consequently, socialization is the way through which an individual's identity becomes intertwined with an organization.

## **Volunteer Socialization**

Similar to organizational socialization, effective volunteer socialization contributes to individual's becoming more connected with the nonprofit s/he is working with and is an important factor in volunteer retention (Hidalgo & Moreno, 2009; Jordan, 2010;. Kramer, 2011; McComb, 1995). McComb (1995) investigates how members of the organization communicate socialization and training goals to new volunteers and what impact that had on them. McComb (1995) found that socialization worked to not only teach new volunteers how to do their jobs well, it also allowed them to see the enjoyment in doing the task they volunteered for, without fear that they were performing it wrong. The way by which the organization communicated this socialization process was through multiple sources, which "included the formal training program, written training documents, resource materials such as maps, visitors guides etc., and oral communication" (p. 309). McComb found that the impact of this type of intentional socialization communication was volunteers who stayed, "eight had worked for 15 to 20 years, nine for 10 to 14 years, working 52 three or four and a half hour shifts a year" (p. 311). The findings of this study reveal that intentional organizational socialization contributes to the longevity of volunteers.

Hidalgo and Moreno (2009) examined the impact that the level of integration within the organization had on volunteers, and their intention to continue volunteering. Specifically, the factor they focused on was how much the organization integrated volunteers into the daily life of the organization. The four criteria that researchers found that predicted a volunteer's intention to remain were social networks, organizational support, understanding, and the training received to perform his/her tasks. Social



networks referred to the relationships the volunteers had with others inside the organization, organizational support referred to the support felt from the other volunteers and organization staff, understanding occurred when volunteers comprehended his or her role within the organization, and training was the classes and education received from the organization. The authors explain that the aforementioned, which they refer to as organizational variables, are an important influence in the satisfaction of volunteers with their job and their intention to stay and continue to volunteer with the organization (2009). The authors specifically state that, “good social relationships inside the organization, support from the organization staff, positive evaluation of the job they perform, and training they receive contribute positively to their intention of remaining in the volunteer activity” (p. 598).

Jordan (2010) further investigated the relationship between organizational socialization activities, volunteer commitment, and job satisfaction. She found that when socialization experiences, such as group training of new volunteers, were provided by the hospitals she studied, participants experienced more satisfaction with their jobs. The group training occurred with only new volunteers and was focused on acclimating the newcomers to their roles by providing “common, organized experiences” to “confirm the newcomers existing values” (p. 11).

Specifically, Jordan (2010) found that “when the hospitals in this investigation provided socialization experiences that provided common learning experiences in which new volunteers were separated from others while learning, experienced identifiable phases of learning, had the opportunity to learn from experienced members who acted as role models, and had their values validated, the potential existed to increase each

volunteer's satisfaction" (p. 238-239). This research and the finding indicate that a planned approach, which includes new volunteer specific training and education, to socializing volunteers is beneficial to increasing job satisfaction for volunteers.

With the aforementioned studies in mind, which all point to organizational socialization being an effective way of increasing volunteer retention, Haski-Leventhal, and Bargal (2008) introduced a model of volunteer stages and transitions. Examining proposed volunteer models of socialization is valuable in understanding the volunteer socialization process and what elements contribute to building a volunteer's identity with a nonprofit organization. There have been many socialization models developed, however for the purpose of this project and the understanding of the reader, this particular model will be examined due to the clarity with which it aids in the understanding of the socialization process.

Their model focuses more on the psychological aspects of volunteering and "portrays the process of volunteering, its stages and transitions that occur during the organization involvement of volunteers" (Haski-Leventhal & Bargal, 2008, p. 95). The stages and transitions of this model include nomination phase, which is the initial interaction between the potential volunteer and the organization. The next is entering the organization transition when the newcomer becomes an active volunteer by being selected, trained, and then s/he begins to volunteer. Once the newcomer has transitioned into the organization, s/he experiences the phase of being a newcomer, when the new volunteers are working on figuring out their own roles and do not yet feel needed or skilled. Next, the transition of accommodation occurs when the newcomer becomes emotionally involved, skilled at what they do and effective emotionally. This means that

the volunteer has adjusted himself or herself to the identity of the organization, group and/or clients.

A possible transition after the accommodation transition occurs is when a volunteer is ejected from the organization. The researchers (Haski-Leventhal & Bargal, 2008) explain that this possible transition may be caused by a) the organization identifying a volunteer who is not a good fit and asking him or her to leave, b) a volunteer choosing to leave; or c) a volunteer who has spent a considerable amount of time volunteering, and finding it fulfilling, choosing to cease volunteering with the organization. If ejection does not occur, the next phase is involvement emotionally. This phase refers to the point at which volunteers are skilled and successful in their work and also just as enthusiastic about it as newcomers. The transition to affiliation follows and is the part of the model where volunteers become senior volunteers.

The aforementioned transition then leads to a phase where volunteers are established and the “work becomes an established part of one’s life” (Haski-Leventhal & Bargal, 2008, p. 88). The researchers discuss how this phase could either lead to burnout or a possible transition to “self-renewal” where volunteers may reflect on their work and end up feeling more committed to it than ever. The researchers included a transition for exiting in their model and explain it as “the accumulation of the different reasons for leaving and the emotional detachment that now reaches its peak” (Haski-Leventhal & Bargal, 2008, p. 93). Lastly, the phase where a volunteer retires is the point at which a volunteer reaches the end of his or her time with the organization and separates physically and emotionally. The researchers built this model for examination of traditional volunteering and in that context volunteers experienced deep emotional

ups/downs, shifts in attitudes and perceptions and relationships with others. Figure 1 illustrates the phases and transitions of the Volunteering Stages and Transitions Model.

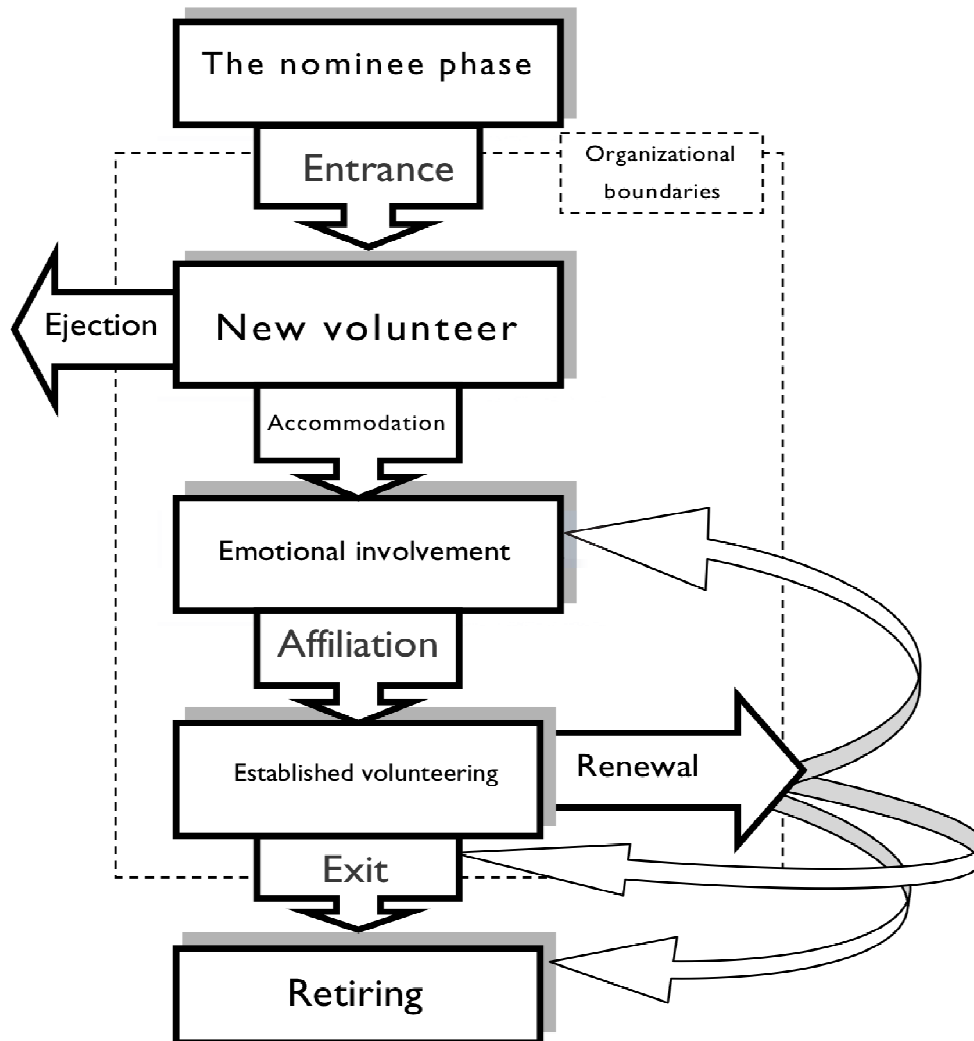


Figure 1: Volunteering Stages and Transitions Model (Haski-Leventhal & Bargal, 2008, p. 74).

The results of the authors' research reveal that it is not just the passing of time that encourages transitions between phases for volunteers. It is more so that "the dominant occurrences, emotional changes, rituals, and internal changes bring about the transitions" (Haski-Leventhal & Bargal, 2008, p. 95). When new volunteers begin, they

have their own expectations. However, these expectations were met with a reality that did not measure up. In order to make sense of this, volunteers had to make internal changes and give new meanings to their reality. They also explain that emotional development is a dominant occurrence that takes place throughout the transition from idealism to realism in the transitions between phases for volunteers (Haski-Leventhal & Bargal, 2008). They found that the results from their study emphasize the importance of other people in the transition process for the volunteers. While the organization plays a role in the process to the newcomer, the other volunteers and workers, and the clients, have an important part in the socialization process of volunteers as well (Haski-Leventhal & Bargal, 2008).

With the study by Haski-Leventhal and Bargal (2008) in mind, Kramer (2011), builds on existing research to propose a multilevel communication-based socialization model of voluntary membership. His model focuses on how communication experiences influence socialization of volunteers as they move among various membership levels. Kramer explains the levels of his model in the following way. The first level of the model recognizes the importance of communication experiences and how they have an influence on the socialization process as volunteer's transition through the different statuses. The second level places an emphasis on the socialization experiences of volunteers in an organization who are influenced by their membership in other groups and organizations, for example, "family, work, and other volunteer positions" (Kramer, 2011, p.250).

In the third level Kramer (2011) argues that the co occurring memberships of multiple volunteers across several organizations can influence the volunteer's socialization experiences in certain volunteer organizations (2011). One example he gives for this is when he encountered two men who not only were volunteering where he was,

but also worked at the same university as he. Kramer (2011) began to establish a relationship with these men and when they were all volunteering together they would discuss work related topics, and when they saw each other at work, they would discuss volunteer related topics. He explains how he transitioned with these men from newcomer volunteer to established member and also experienced further socialization into the workplace because of the multiple connections. Kramer (2011) explains, “the proposed multilevel model should be viewed as a step in the development of a socialization model for voluntary membership...it is hoped that this proposed model helps focus attention on how communication is integral to the socialization of voluntary members in groups and organizations” (p. 252).

In this literature review I suggest that the socialization process and its steps are key in building volunteer’s identity with a nonprofit organization and integral to their decision to remain. The purpose of this project is to develop a training program that both effectively socializes volunteers and decreases turnover. This project will be accomplished by conducting focus groups and a turning point analysis in order to reveal the factors that help or hinder a volunteer’s socialization process. The following research questions will guide the assessment for the proposed training program.

RQ1: What organizational events are perceived by volunteers at nonprofit organizations that transform them from “outsiders” to “insiders”?

RQ2: Do specific organizational events coincide with volunteers’ increased intention to stay?

RQ3: Do nonprofit organizational socialization methods impact the different types of turning points experienced by volunteers?

## **Chapter Two: Methods**

The factors that contribute to volunteer socialization and increased identification with nonprofit organizations were examined for this project. In order to accomplish this, a qualitative approach was used through the use of focus group interviews, which provide in depth information that was be analyzed through the lens of a turning point analysis (Bulis & Bach, 1989). These focus groups served as a needs assessment to determine the type of training needing to be developed for this project. Beebe, Mottet and Roach (2013) argue that every element of the training process depends on the needs of the trainees, which is why needs assessments are crucial in the training development process. Before conducting these focus groups, permission to continue was received from the Institutional Review Board. Once data were collected, analyzed and discussed, a training plan was developed and focused on how to enhance the socialization practices of nonprofit organizations.

Turning point analysis is a method used by researchers to identify patterns of change (Bolton, 1961). Baxter and Bullis (1986) make the point that the turning point analysis has been “underutilized” in research and can provide “a rich understanding of relationship processes” (p, 470-471). Bullis and Bach (1989) use turning point analysis to examine socialization and change in organizational identification and a few of their examples of what a turning point could be included, “sense of community,” “receiving informal recognition,” and “gaining formal recognition” (p. 281). They list four reasons for why turning point analysis is valuable. The first reason is that it “does not assume the socialization process follows a clear pattern of growth” (p, 276). The second reason is that it this type of analysis has room for thorough review of “change points” recognized



by participants. Third, turning point analysis emphasizes self-report so that participants do not have to remember events from long ago; the fourth and final reason is that it is based on the reports of people who are currently in the midst of the socialization process. For these reasons, turning point analysis is a valuable method in the study of organizational socialization and consequently why it was chosen for this project to be part of the needs assessment. Specifically, participants will be asked to chart on a graph turning points that increased, or decreased their level of identification with their organization.

Central to the Needs Centered Training Model (Figure 2) is the “process of identifying the needs of the organization, and especially the specific trainees who will be present in the training session” (Beebe, Mottet & Roach, 2013, p. 18). This is the needs assessment part of the training process and in the case of this study was accomplished through the aforementioned focus groups. Analyzing how nonprofit organizations socialize their volunteers is essential to the training process because “every other aspect of the designing and delivering a training presentation depends on the needs of the trainees” (Beebe, Mottet & Roach, 2013, p. 18). Therefore, in order to develop an effective socialization training program for nonprofit organizations to increase volunteer retention, a *needs assessment* is vital.

Following the focus group needs assessments, Beebe, Mottet, and Roach’s (2013) Needs-Centered Training Model (NCTM) served as the guide for developing a training program for volunteer socialization. The steps included in this model are, *analyzing the training task*, which refers to knowing exactly what the trainer wants the trainees to be able to accomplish once the training is conducted. The next step is to *develop training*

*objectives*, which refers to the developing of “learning outcomes” that the trainer wants to see result from the training.

Next, *organizing training content* refers to “drafting the information that trainees need to know and describing the behaviors that they will be expected to perform” (Beebe, Mottet & Roach, 2013, p. 20). After deciding upon the content, *determining training methods* is next. This means coming up with an effective way to teach the content that the trainer has decided to train on. For example, one may decide to use role-playing scenarios to help trainees grasp the content being taught. Once training methods are decided upon selecting training resources is next. This step is when the trainer needs to decide which resources, video, discussion questions, graphs etc., are needed for the training.

Completing the *training plan* occurs once the trainer has completed all of the aforementioned steps. This part of the training process involves developing “a comprehensive written plan that describes how you will present your training session”(Beebe, Mottet & Roach, 2013, p. 21). *Delivering the training* is the second to last step of the process and occurs when the trainer has completed all of the steps and puts on the training. Lastly, *assessing how well the training was received* is the final step in the Needs Centered Training Model. This is the part of the process where the trainer is able to see how effective the training actually was. Figure 2 displays Beebe, Mottet, and Roach’s Needs-Centered Training Model.

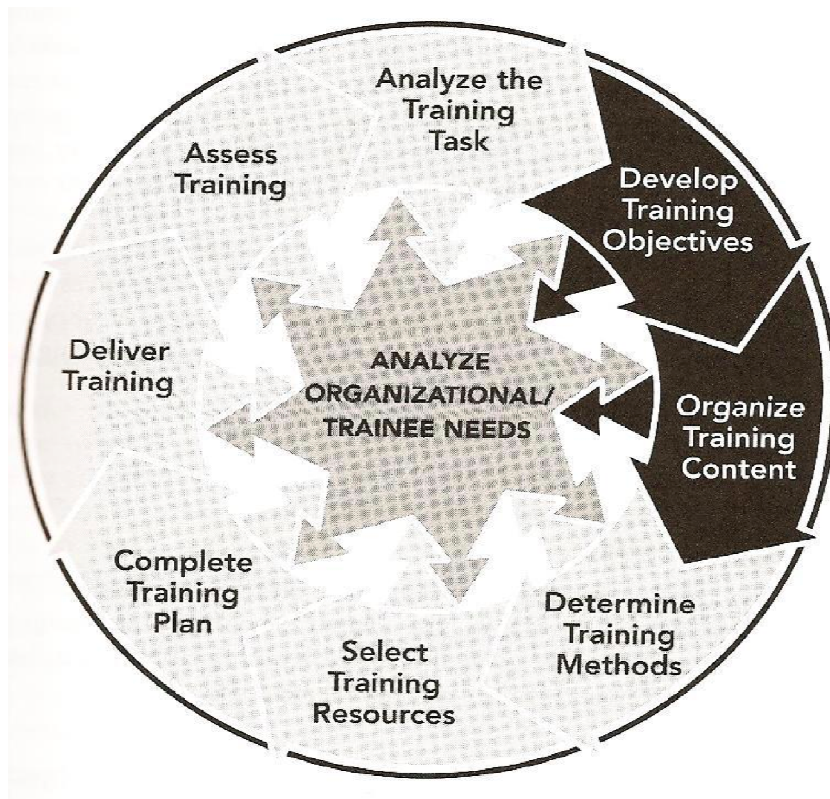


Figure 2 The Needs Centered Training Model. (Beebe, Mottet and Roach, 2013, p. 106).

## Participants

For this study, 19 individuals who volunteer or manage volunteers participated and the focus groups consisted of male and female participants. Some participants were college students, some were stay-at-home moms, some were part-time employees, some were full-time employees and some were volunteer managers. Two focus groups with volunteer managers were conducted in order to assess awareness of socialization among the individuals who the training is being developed for. The focus groups with the volunteers were intended to evaluate what socialization tactics are important to volunteer identification. All participants were high school graduates, U.S. citizens, and currently volunteering or at one time have volunteered for at least three months with a nonprofit

organization. IRB approval was sought prior to conducting focus groups and participants explicitly consented to participate in the study (IRB approval and consent form is provided in Appendix A).

Of the college student individuals, there were four participants (21%). The stay at home mom participants made up three of the individuals who participated (16%). No part time employees participated, seven individuals were full time employees (37%), and five individuals were full time volunteer managers (26%).

## **Procedures**

Participants were recruited from the researcher's social network and focus groups were conducted with participants ranging in group size from one to seven individuals. Participants were asked to read and sign an informed consent form prior to participating in the focus group (Appendix A). The Retrospective Interview Technique was used at one point during the focus group (Fitzgerald & Surra, 1981). The RIT is a type of retrospective self-report interview during which participants recall various turning points in their volunteer process. These turning points were subsequently graphed on a path from volunteer initiation to the present. The questions that were asked of the volunteers and volunteer managers during the focus group times are included in appendix B and C.

Data collection consisted of four groupings of questions with a total of fifteen questions being asked (Focus group questions can be found in Appendix B). Kvale and Brinkman (2009) recommend keeping questions brief and simple, as well as having open-ended type questions. The first grouping included general questions used to capture demographic information. To find out information about participants volunteer history, four functional questions were asked. Questions were asked about how they got involved

with the organization, how long they had been there, and how often they volunteer. Knowing how often they volunteer and how they originally got involved will aid in understanding the participant's turning points.

Timeline questions were the second grouping, and were concerned with participants recalling what their initial experiences were when they started with the organization and how that evolved over time. The third grouping looked at the volunteer's level of identification with the nonprofit organization they volunteer with, and asked questions to get an idea of how much of the individual's identity is associated with the organization. At this point, the volunteer participants were asked to plot on a graph, on a sheet of paper given to them, their identification levels on a volunteer timeline. The final grouping of questions were designed to ask participants about their socialization process, using Myers and Oetzel's (2003) six dimensions. Follow up questions were asked when appropriate as well as probing questions to encourage more depth to answers (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009). The volunteer manager's focus group questions were similar to the volunteer questions, but catered towards managing volunteers. The main difference is that volunteer managers were not asked to plot their turning points with the organization on a graph.

Once the data from the focus groups were analyzed, the project moved on to the remaining steps of the NCTM (See Figure 3). Based on the focus group responses, which served as the needs assessment for this project, the training task was determined and analyzed. This meant that the topics to be included in the training were decided upon, as well as what skills would need to be trained that are relevant to the socialization of volunteers. This step is key because it narrows down the information that will be essential

to the training plan based on the needs assessment. The training methods utilized were also determined during this step because they are based on whatever will best teach the topic to the volunteer managers.

Furthermore, additional research on the topics necessary for the training occurred during the remaining steps of the NCTM. Beebe, Mottet and Roach (2013) make the point that gaining knowledge on the material that is to be presented during the training that will help to accomplish the training objectives is crucial for the teaching of the material (p. 107). When the research was accomplished, training objectives were decided upon. These objectives were developed to meet Beebe, et al.'s (2013) four criteria for objective writing, which are that objectives must be observable, attainable, measurable and specific. The training objectives served as a way to guide the training plan and can also serve as a way to assess the effectiveness of the training. Beebe, et al., (2013) explain that objectives focus on what the trainees need to know about the material presented and how they are able to communicate about this material. The training content for this training plan was organized in a column format for ease of being able to see and understand the training plan.

Once the training content was organized, the training methods were decided upon. A combination of methods were chosen in order to appeal to a variety of learning styles and the methods chosen are lecture, discussion and experiential activities (Beebe, et al., 2013).

After the training methods were chosen the next step was completing the training plan. This means that a written plan is prepared which includes all of the information that will be covered during the training. The plan also includes what materials will be needed

for the various topics covered, the teaching method that goes with each topic and the time frame of the overall training as well as the individual topic lessons (Beebe, et al., 2013).

The plan can be found in Appendix...

The final step was to create an assessment that could be used to determine how effective the training was. The assessment consists of questions that reflect the training objectives. How well the objectives have been met will reveal the effectiveness of the training. If the training is ineffective, further research could be conducted in order to understand which parts of the training resulted in low assessment scores which will help the trainer to understand where new content or methods need to be used.

### **Analysis**

The researcher condensed the focus group transcripts and notes into concise descriptions of the volunteer turning points. Once the notes and transcriptions were gathered, a constant comparison method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) was used to code the qualitative data by developing categories and themes and comparing the participants' answers to each other. The reoccurring turning point themes were labeled and the data organized into categories. Data from participant's graphs were processed in order to identify the positive and negative organizational events encountered throughout the participant's socialization process. The factors that contributed to volunteer increased identification, or decreased, with their nonprofit organization were noted and used for developing the training plan.

## **Chapter Three: Results**

The focus groups provided important information for the needs assessment and helped to guide the development of the socialization of volunteers training. Participant responses were analyzed through a turning point analysis and coded for emergent themes concerning what helped them to feel more as insiders and what factors contributed to feeling as outsiders. The responses have been organized below into the four categories that the questions were asked from. First, the responses from the volunteer manager focus groups will be examined and then the volunteer focus groups will follow.

### **Volunteer Manager Focus Groups**

#### **Demographic Responses**

Two male and three female volunteer managers participated in the volunteer manager focus groups. Their volunteer management experience ranged from two years to forty years, and the number of volunteers they oversee ranged from eight to forty. The typical amount of interaction between the volunteer managers and their volunteers was tri-weekly to every day. The nonprofit programs represented by the volunteer managers included a youth program, soup kitchen/clothes closet and a sports program. When the participants were asked what prompted them to become volunteer managers two responses fell into the category of it just being part of their job. However, three of the volunteer managers answered by saying, “it is an opportunity to change people’s lives directly rather than through politics” (SP), the next said, “the challenge of impacting athletes so that they can use their platform to influence others” (GM), and lastly, “the



opportunity to develop the volunteers themselves by giving them challenging experiences” (CM).

### **Volunteer Experiences**

The first impressions of the volunteers that the managers work with ranged from initially seeing the volunteers as having a desire to be involved in something outside of their daily routine, other centered, nervous, excited and individuals who are teachable. When asked about positive and negative experiences with volunteers over the course of their managing careers, the participants responded with various stories. The majority of the negative experiences had to do with the varying personality types of volunteers, especially volunteers who seemed to be volunteering for what they could get out of it, instead of volunteering to help and serve.

### **Volunteer Engagement**

The aspects of the organization that the volunteer managers think have helped their volunteers feel more a part of it included, engaging the volunteers and giving them responsibilities so that they have ownership and buy into the cause a bit more, one of the volunteer managers even said, “involvement breeds commitment” (SP). Another volunteer manager expressed that utilizing a volunteers skill set is key to engaging because she has seen volunteers come alive when they realize they have something unique that they can bring to the organization that benefits it. Also, noted by all of the volunteer managers, the relationships with the other volunteers is key to the positive engagement levels of the volunteers, if they have positive relationships with the other volunteers then they tend to have positive engagement with the organization. The

elements that the volunteer managers have observed which have made the volunteers feel less a part of the organization included criticism, negative non-verbal communication, not connecting positively relationally and not have the instructions and expectations clearly communicated.

### **Socialization**

When asked specifically what elements contribute to helping volunteers feel more a part of the organization the volunteer managers all communicated that making sure they are familiar with the mission and vision of the organization is an important element, one volunteer manager put it this way, “give the volunteers the big picture and show them how they fit into that picture” (SP). Another volunteer manager explained it by saying, “help them see milestones form and be accomplished and show them that they have a voice and include them in the successes” (GM). A few other elements offered included social activities outside of the volunteer job that say thank you and we care about you, as well as celebrating ideas offered by volunteers and acting on them.

The question of when the managers notice volunteers beginning to feel as though they are a part of the organization and why incited various responses. One participant explained that she notices it whenever the individual volunteer begins to bring friends to volunteer and the volunteer uses personalizing words such as, “my”, or “we” when referring to the organization. Another participant noted that it occurs when the volunteer finds what they are really good at and how that fits into what the organization does. The common thread between all of the volunteer managers responses for this question

included the volunteers developing relationships with one another and with the individuals or clients being served.

Similar responses were voiced for the question of how the volunteer managers help their volunteers learn their role. One volunteer manager put it this way, “verbalize it, demonstrate it, and reinforce it LOUDLY” (SP). This sentiment was reflected in the answers of the other volunteer managers who expressed that verbal communication of the volunteers role was very important, as well as written directions and/or role definitions being important.

All of the volunteer managers expressed similar sentiments in regards to the question of what responsibilities they give volunteers over time that they do not give volunteers who are just starting out and when that happens. They all referred to the giving of more and more responsibilities as time passed and the volunteers had shown growth and knowledge of the organization and their roles. They noted that just by observing they could typically pick up on when a volunteer was ready for another job and/or more responsibility. One manager also mentioned that it is important to know “when not to give them a job” (RP). He went on to explain that not all volunteers are alike and just because two individuals may have been volunteering for the same amount of time, it does not necessarily mean both are ready for an increase of jobs and/or responsibilities.

## **Volunteer Focus Groups**

### **Demographic Responses**

Two males and twelve females participated in the volunteer focus groups. The time spent volunteering ranged from three months to twenty-two years and the types of

organizations represented were a spinning guild, a church, and a youth program. The participants time spent volunteering was anywhere from monthly to three to four times a week. Participants indicated that what prompted them to volunteer was a “love of fiber and spinning” (OM), “working with youth” (ES), “getting to know people” (MP) and “a desire to serve” (BC).

### **Volunteer Experiences**

First impressions of the organizations varied. In the case of the youth program, participants indicated that they were first intimidated by the kids, thought they were crazy, overwhelmed by the environment, and thought it would be a good place to learn and make friends. In regards to the spinning guild, the participants voiced feelings of immediate support and nurturing, as well as being a learning environment. The first impressions for the church volunteers was that of a community in which they could serve and get to know people.

The positive experiences shared by the participants included safe environments, community, support, and building relationships, as well as the opportunities to learn, develop skills and strengths and seeing their work benefit the kids and/or community. The negative experiences included relational issues with other volunteers, the time commitment and dealing with mean kids in the youth program. All of the volunteers during this question of the focus groups were quick to point out the positives and spend time discussing them and slow to mention negatives.

### **Learning Volunteer Roles**

When the volunteers were asked who in the organization helped them learn the ropes some expressed that learning took place through volunteer training meetings, others learned from the volunteer managers who would teach and offer feedback as the situations presented themselves and a few others expressed learning from experienced volunteers. Clear communication of expectations was a big part of what the people did to help new volunteers learn their roles. A few other things mentioned that helped volunteers learn their roles were other volunteers who had been there longer and who offered tips and advice on how to best do their job, as well as support and encouragement when needed.

Criticism was a unanimous answer between the volunteer focus groups when asked about who in the organization has made them feel less a part of it and what they did that made the volunteers feel that way. Several examples were given of times when a volunteer thought he or she was doing well, but received criticism from another volunteer, volunteer manager, or client and immediately feelings of being less a part of the organization were felt. Another element that contributed to volunteers feeling less a part of the organization was a feeling of being undermined, not acknowledged or not valued. For example, one volunteer at the youth program explained how she was trying to enforce the rules with a group of kids who were being rowdy by splitting them up for the game. Then one of the paid staff, and leaders, at the program counteracted what she just did by putting them back together on the same team for the game. She noted that this happened several times where she was trying to enforce rules and this particular leader, for whatever reason, would ignore what she was doing. She felt undermined and less a part of the organization at these times.

The volunteers expressed fairly unanimous positive feelings about the other volunteers who are a part of their organization. The spinning guild participants raved about the kindness of everyone in the group and how the volunteers who have been there longer are quick to mentor the new volunteers. The youth program volunteers talked about how there is no drama and good volunteer team-building time, which helps to contribute to the positive feelings about each other. The volunteers from the church had mostly positive things to say about the individuals they worked with. Two expressed wishing they could spend more time with the other volunteers and share experiences more. One explained that for the most part she liked the other volunteers, but had noticed a group that had begun to conform to each other and lose elements of what makes them individuals.

The last question under the identification section asked participants to plot on a graph experiences they had that were turning points that made them feel more or less a part of the organization from when they started to where they are now. When participants felt more a part of the organization they chose points that were higher on the identification scale of the graph and when they felt less a part of the organization they chose lower points. The majority of the graphs resembled an electrocardiogram with some turning points being high on the identification scale and others being low over the course of the participant's time volunteering with their organization.

The youth program volunteers expressed several turning points on their graphs where they felt an increase of identification with the organization. These turning points occurred when the kids finally knew their names at the events, gravitated towards them and when they began to lead games, do the announcements and lead small groups.

Turning points when their identification dropped were staff changes and another volunteer stopped volunteering.

The spinning guild volunteers expressed turning points that increased their identification being becoming more involved in the administration of the organization including, becoming president, secretary and newsletter editor. Several participants also expressed that the retreats and events put on by the guild were turning points towards increased identification and feeling a part of the organization. The turning points on the graphs that decreased the feeling of identification with the organization were when administrative terms were up, tension with another volunteer was experienced and when personal issues arose, such as a death in the family.

The church participants conveyed high levels of identification initially through their turning points where they documented the excitement of being a part of a group and helping and slowly getting more and more responsibility. The turning points in their graphs at the higher levels of identification were experienced when they were given more responsibility and leadership. The fluctuation of identification levels for these participants occurred when transitions in their roles occurred, as well as over commitment, feeling burnt out and taken advantage of.

There are several common turning points for volunteers that increase identification, feeling a part of the organization, which came out of these turning point graphs, as well as commonalities of turning points that decrease identification. The turning points that increase identification levels are when volunteers experience recognition and appreciation, an increase of responsibilities and leadership and positive

relationship experiences. The turning points that were commonly associated with a decreasing of feeling a part of the organization included volunteer relationship issues, change in leadership and loss of responsibilities.

### **Socialization**

When participants were asked what elements of their volunteer training contributed to them feeling more a part of the organization, the majority of the responses were echoed throughout the focus groups. Many of the participants indicated that learning from volunteers who had been volunteering longer played a large role in feeling more a part of the organization. One youth program volunteer said, “watching veteran volunteers interact with the kids helps you see how you are supposed to interact with them” (JL). Another response, which was communicated by several participants, was about how clear directions and communication of expectations helped. A church volunteer explained that because “the organization for the nursery is so good, I felt that I had the tools I needed to succeed” (MC).

The next question asked of the participants in this section was about when they started feeling as though they were a part of the organization and why. The youth program volunteers conveyed that it occurred when they felt recognized for their work. One volunteer said, “when the kids started recognizing me, accepting me and wanting to hang out” (SF). Another youth program volunteer explained, “there have been a few times when I have had parents come up to me and say that “my kid really appreciates you, you make them feel really welcome” and that is really awesome to hear”(CJ). The spinning guild participants all expressed feeling immediately part of the organization



because of the “safe environment” and welcoming they receive. One participant explained the welcome by saying, “when people are new we go up and talk to them and we do introductions around so they can get a feel for what we do – someone always goes up and talks to the new person”(MN).

The next question broached the subject of how the participants learned their volunteer roles, not necessarily their formal jobs, but their social and environment roles. The spinning guild made the point that they try to communicate that there are not a lot of rules and requirements, but that new members are folded in with support, encouragement and explanations of what they do and why they do it. The youth program volunteers explained that a lot of role learning took place through observation of the leaders and more experienced volunteers. Although, one participant noted the personal growth she experienced which contributed to her learning her role:

I think it was more just personal growth for me, I did not think I could be a volunteer, I especially did not think I could be a volunteer with middle schoolers. I thought these things smell, they are weird and I do not know what to do with them. Then I learned that I myself could step into a leadership role, I am an older friend/mentor type, and learning that they watch me and that I have to adjust who I am around them, because they see me as a leader and I think that has made me grow into my role as a volunteer (CP).

The next question the volunteers were asked is what responsibilities do they have now that they did not have when they started volunteering and across the focus groups there was a resounding answer of “more”. All of the participants conveyed having more responsibilities now than they did when they first started and how they began to get those responsibilities over time and as their volunteer managers or leaders noticed that they were capable of taking on more and trustworthy. One volunteer from the youth program

mentioned that, “I have a lot more responsibility in the sense that they (the leaders) trust me with the kids alone and that I can handle it. I feel a lot more trusted now by the leaders that run this” (CP). The spinning guild participants shared similar sentiments, as did the church volunteers, to the fact that responsibilities came after volunteers were faithful to showing up, be willing to help and trustworthy. The spinning guild participants were the only group to make the point that they feel they also have a lot of help in taking on new responsibilities and they are careful to make sure that “no one is completely left to feel hung out to dry” (LN).

## **Chapter Four: Training Plan**

Based on the focus group discussions from the volunteer participants and the volunteer managers, three topics or themes emerged as crucial components for the volunteer manager socialization training. These themes were, 1) foster a positive and supportive volunteer relational environment, 2) help volunteers see that they are needed, useful and making an impact, and 3) clearly communicate volunteer expectations. Objectives for the training were developed once these themes were chosen. These objectives explain what behavior the trainees should be able to display or perform after completing the training. The objectives include:

1. At the end of the training session, volunteer managers should be able to list, describe and illustrate at least three of the five elements that contribute to a positive and supportive volunteering environment.
2. At the end of the training session, volunteer managers should be able to describe a potential scenario of when to praise a volunteer's work.
3. At the end of the training session, volunteer managers should be able to recognize and provide examples of how their volunteers are making an impact.
4. At the end of the training session, volunteer managers should be able to list and describe five of the seven C's for effective communication.
5. At the end of the training session, volunteer managers should be able to identify and discuss what their volunteer role expectations are.

## **Assessing Objectives**

The learning objectives listed above meet Beebe, Mottet and Roach (2013) criteria for learning objectives because they are attainable, observable, measurable and specific (Beebe, Mottet & Roach, 2013). Trainees cannot be expected to retain every last bit of information that was shared with them during the training session, which is why the objectives only include having trainees remember some of the information, thus making them attainable. The objectives are observable because the trainer can ask trainees to recite the seven C's or observe them in practice during the experiential activities. The training objectives are measurable because the trainer can hear how many of the seven C's were able to be recited by the trainees or observe how well a certain role-playing scenario goes. Lastly, the training objectives are specific because the objectives prompt the trainees to be able to recite certain information or display certain behaviors, such as recognizing and providing examples of how a volunteer is making a difference in their organization.

## **Organize Training Content**

The content that will be delivered during the training is based on what the volunteer managers will need in order to accomplish the aforementioned learning objectives. The topics will be discussed in the order that they emerged from the needs assessment because they seem to build on each other well. This is important because without knowing how to foster a supportive volunteer environment it would be difficult to help volunteers see that they are needed. The last theme, clear communication of volunteer expectations, would then be able to be tied into the discussion and examples of

the aforementioned themes. Prior to discussing the topics, a brief explanation of socialization will be given to the volunteer managers to help with the understanding of the overall topic. Then how to foster a positive and supportive volunteer relational environment will be discussed, followed by helping volunteers see that they are needed, useful and making an impact and lastly, learning how to clearly communicate volunteer expectations will occur.

Each part of the training will include a brief summary of why it is important to volunteer socialization and retention. For example, the section on fostering a positive and supportive volunteer relational environment will include specific examples that volunteers gave of how this contributed to their positive or negative experiences with an organization. The majority of each section of the training will focus on the “how to” achieve the positive environment, “how to” show volunteers they are needed and making an impact and “how to” communicate expectations clearly. See appendix D for training plan.

### **Determining Training Methods**

Beebe, Mottet and Roach (2013) point out that in order to effectively determine training methods to be used for training, it is crucial to be aware of the demographic of the trainees. This training is intended for volunteer managers who, in most cases, will be 25 years of age or more, which means that trainees will be adult learners. Considering that trainees will all be adults, andragogy, “the science and art of teaching adults” (Beebe, Mottet, & Roach, 2013, p. 33), was used to determine the training methods.

Beebe, Mottet and Roach (2013) explain that adult learning is based on five assumptions, “adult learners need to know why they are learning something”, “adult learners bring years of experience to the classroom”, “adults tend to be self-motivated”, “adults know their own deficiencies, and they know what they need to learn to become successful” and “adults are problem-centered learners” (p. 33). The effectiveness of the training methods will be improved by applying these assumptions.

The first assumption, “adult learners need to know why they’re learning something” is applied to the current training through the use of a guided discussion time on why volunteers stay and leave nonprofit organizations. This discussion is meant to help the trainees associate the issues and triumphs they face on a daily basis to the retention of their volunteers. The next assumption concerns the years of experience that adult learners bring to the table. With this assumption in mind, the trainer is able to begin the training at a higher level and draw upon the experiences of the trainees during the session (Beebe, Mottet, & Roach, 2013). For example, during the section on creating a supportive relational volunteer environment, trainees may be asked to share some of their own experiences with supportive and non-supportive relational environments and what factors contributed to them being that way.

The third assumption, “adults tend to be self-motivated” is reflected in this training by the fact that volunteer managers have decided to attend this training and participate, instead of being required. The fourth assumption makes the point that “adults know their deficiencies, and they know what they need to learn to become successful”, which explains why volunteer managers would attend training on volunteer socialization

and retention in the first place. The training is an opportunity for volunteer managers to personally develop and improve upon volunteer management and retention.

The fifth and final assumption is that “adults are problem-centered learners”. Beebe, Mottet and Roach (2013) make the point that “this adult learning assumption focuses on underlying reason for learning” (p. 34). This is relevant to this training program because the problem is presented to participants on the onset of the training and the solving of that problem is carried out through the training.

In this training, the content is arranged logically, starting off simple and slowly getting more complex (Beebe, Mottet, & Roach, 2013). There is an introduction, which includes a preview of the training content, a body and a conclusion. The information shared within the training is relevant to the trainees because they are all volunteer managers experiencing volunteer retention issues. To increase the trainees motivation to learn, set induction techniques, including quotations, statistics, stories and rhetorical questions will be used (Beebe, Mottet, & Roach, 2013). Quotations from volunteers will serve to reinforce what is being trained, statistics will reveal the rate of volunteer turnover, stories will convey volunteer experiences and rhetorical questions will encourage the trainees to recall personal experiences or at least engage them to put themselves in their volunteer’s shoes.

In order to maintain interest and engagement throughout the training, not only will set inductions be used, there will also be various stimuli used in the form of changing training methods. For example, the training will move from group discussion to lecture to activity and so on. Immediacy behaviors will also be displayed by the trainer throughout

the training to further engage the trainees attention and improve lecture effectiveness (Beebe, Mottet, & Roach, 2013) Examples of immediacy behaviors include, referring to the trainees by name and telling appropriate personal stories as they relate to the content. Lastly, to continue to encourage engagement, trainees will be asked to have “mini discussions” about the content with the person sitting next to them at certain points during the training process.

The time of the training will be organized to give sufficient time for each training method. Beebe, Mottet, and Roach (2013) share three main training methods, lectures, experiential activities and discussions. Lecturing will be allotted ten to fifteen minutes. Group discussions will be more flexible, between fifteen to twenty minutes in length, so that participants are not rushed, but that there is also not a lot of “dead” time. Experiential activities will have between ten to twenty minutes, depending on the activity. This training incorporates all of these methods in order to address the various learning styles, visual, aural and kinesthetic (Beebe, Mottet, & Roach, 2013).

Beebe, Mottet, and Roach (2013) explain the three learning styles and the best training methods for each as follows. For the trainees who are visual learners, individuals who process material best when they can view it, PowerPoint will be used, as well as a white board or flip chart. In the case of the aural learners, individuals who learn best when they can hear explanations of concepts and express the information in their own words, lectures and group discussions will be used. Kinesthetic learners benefit from a more “hands-on approach” and will benefit from the role-playing scenarios.

### **Selecting Training Resources**



Due to the high likelihood that the trainees will have different learning styles, which require various resources, this training will have a number of materials. One of the main items needed for the training is PowerPoint, which will serve as the visual aid throughout the training process. The PowerPoint slides will be simple, well edited, uniform and clear in order to encourage trainee comprehension and not overwhelm them (Beebe, Mottet, & Roach, 2013). A white board and writing utensils are also needed for the training for the purpose of the brainstorming times and keeping track of trainee input and group discussion times. In the case that technology is not available in the training room or a white board, the PowerPoint slides will be printed three to a page, “note taking style”, and handed out to trainees if necessary.

### **Completing Training Plan**

At this stage of the training development, it is crucial to create a training plan. Beebe, Mottet, and Roach (2013) explain it is necessary because it “is a written description of a training session; it contains (1) the objectives, (2) a summary of the training content, (3) a description of the training methods, and (4) a detailed description of all presentation aids and resources that are needed to transform the plan into a training session” (p. 198). An example of what this training plan will look like can be found in Appendix D.

The format of this training plan is a multicolumn format. Beebe, Mottet, and Roach (2013) refer to this format as “the most structured training plan format” (p. 206), and explain that it “presents the essential training plan elements in four columns of information that support one or more training objectives” (p. 207). Each of the four

columns contains the elements needed for the training time (how long the training will take), content (information that will be covered in each section), method (how the information will be shared) and materials (what will be needed for each section of the training). The various topics included in this training are socialization, supportive environments and how to clearly communicate. These topics were chosen based on the themes that emerged from the needs assessment of the volunteers and volunteer managers.

### **Assess Training Plan**

The final stage of the needs-centered training model is to assess the effectiveness of the training. Assessment of the training is key to ensuring that the training was effective and it enables the trainer to improve his or her overall effectiveness as a trainer (Beebe, Mottet, and Roach, 2013). The assessment used for this training was developed based on what Kirkpatrick (1998) recommends for training assessment and is also explained in light of Bloom's taxonomy, which is more instructional assessment driven (Beebe, Mottet & Roach, 2013). Kirkpatrick's model for training evaluation includes four levels of assessment. According to Kirkpatrick, the first level measures the degree to which participants react positively to the training. This first level can be understood by Bloom's taxonomy as the affective learning phase, which "focuses on changing attitudes and enhancing motivation" (Beebe, Mottet & Roach, 2013, p. 259). The second level of Kirkpatrick's model seeks to measure the extent to which participants obtain the proposed knowledge and/or skills based on their participation in the training. This is known as cognitive learning in Bloom's taxonomy and focuses on the knowledge and factual information acquired (Beebe, Mottet & Roach, 2013).

Kirkpatrick's model continues with the third level measuring to what extent the participants apply what they learned during training when they are back at work. This is known as behavioral learning according to Bloom's taxonomy, which "focuses on developing skills and changing behavior" (Beebe, Mottet & Roach, 2013, p. 259). Lastly, Kirkpatrick's fourth level measures the degree to which the pre-determined outcomes happen as a by-product of the training and possible reinforcement. This level does not necessarily align with any of Bloom's learning taxonomies (Beebe, Mottet & Roach, 2013).

Based on Kirkpatrick's four levels of assessment, a semantic differential scale was chosen as the assessment tool for this training plan. Beebe, Mottet, and Roach (2013) explain how this type of assessment "measures attitudes by asking people to choose between opposite positions" (p. 262). An example of the assessment chosen for this training can be found in Appendix E. The scale measures five aspects of the training and meets two of the four levels of assessment, 1) the participant's reaction, which is level one of Kirkpatrick's training assessment and 2) the likelihood of trainees applying the training to their job, which is level three. Level two of Kirkpatrick's assessment model can be observed, to a certain extent, during the training. For example, trainees can display the knowledge or skills acquired during the experiential learning activities like role-playing. Level four of Kirkpatrick's assessment is not measured by the semantic scale and cannot be observed during the training. This level of assessment would more appropriately be measured by a follow up survey, which could be developed for this training.

## **Chapter Five: Summary**

Expectations, satisfaction, and socialization were all themes that emerged from the review of literature on volunteer retention. However, for the purpose of this project and training plan, socialization was the focus. That is what prompted the research questions, which guided the development of the focus group needs assessment.

The results from this project indicate that the organizational events that are perceived by volunteers to transform them from “outsiders” to “insiders” do not necessarily have to do with organizational events as much as organizational culture. Volunteers expressed that a positive and supportive volunteer relational environment increased their “insider” feeling. Haski-Leventhal and Bargal (2008) found that the results from their study emphasize the importance of other people in the transition process for the volunteers. While the organization plays a role in the process to the newcomer, the other volunteers, workers, and the clients, have an important part in the socialization process of volunteers as well.

The specific organizational events that coincided with volunteer intention to stay, or at least increased identification with the organization, were times when volunteers saw that they were needed, useful, making an impact and receiving more responsibility over time. These “events” were communicated by a volunteer manager, fellow volunteer or client, and the turning points where identification with the organization was increasing included situations or “events” where volunteers were given more responsibility, such as being in charge of leading a game and being able to see or hear about the impact that they were making. For example, one volunteer voiced how affirmation from the several parents increased her identification with the organization:

There have been a few times where I have had parents come up to me and say ‘my kid really appreciates you, you make them feel really welcome’ and that is really awesome to hear. It makes me feel like, even if I am having a bad week with the kids, but a parent says ‘no you have a really big impact on my daughters life, she feels really welcome around you and happy to be here’ that is super cool and is one of my favorite things to hear, to hear that I am making an impact and having an impact on kids lives (CP).

In regards to research question of “do organizational socialization methods impact the different types of turning points experienced by volunteers?” The answer would be a resounding yes from participants in this project. One possible socialization method mentioned by participants was more experienced volunteers mentoring new volunteers. Many of the participants expressed learning their volunteer roles and experiencing turning points alongside more veteran volunteers. Also, the receiving of responsibility, whether it was an administrative position or getting to organize and lead a game, were turning points mentioned that can also be seen as organizational socialization methods. Interestingly, a fair amount of turning points mentioned by participants were out of the organizations control. For example, kids in the youth programming beginning to know the new volunteers names and wanting to hang out with them is not a controllable socialization method by the organization.

Instead, the familiarity with clients or fellow volunteers is something that happens or does not happen. The emphasis the participants in this project placed on how important it was to them that they were known seemed to outweigh the importance of knowing their role responsibilities. The experiences and stories that were shared during the focus groups emphasized the knowing and being known value of the participants, while knowing their roles and responsibilities, as volunteers seemed to matter less.

### **Limitations and Directions for Future Research**

The small participant pool can be considered a limitation, but also seen as an advantage. The advantage was that more rich data could be gathered due to the small sample size. The disadvantage was that the results pertain to a small amount of volunteers and volunteer managers. The second factor, that could be considered a limitation, was that the participants were only from five different nonprofit organizations. Future research would benefit from more focus groups with a larger amount of participants, from varying nonprofit organizations around the United States and internationally.

However, this training is valuable because it provides nonprofit organization volunteer managers with the knowledge and ability to improve their socialization strategies for new volunteers. Despite the small sample size of volunteers, there is evidence that there are socialization factors that can be improved upon within nonprofit organizations. With increased awareness of these factors, volunteer managers can implement the strategies learned through the training process and possibly consequently increase their volunteer retention.

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## Appendix A

Form RA-108  
(Rev. 01/14)



### THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA-MISSOULA Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research CHECKLIST / APPLICATION

IRB Protocol No.:

68-15

At the University of Montana (UM), the Institutional Review Board (IRB) is the institutional review body responsible for oversight of all research activities involving human subjects outlined in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Human Research Protection and the National Institutes of Health, Inclusion of Children Policy Implementation.

**Instructions:** A separate application form must be submitted for each project. IRB proposals are approved for no longer than one year and must be continued annually (unless Exempt). Faculty and students may email the completed form as a Word document to [IRB@umontana.edu](mailto:IRB@umontana.edu), or submit a hardcopy to the Office of the Vice President for Research & Creative Scholarship, University Hall 116. Student applications must be accompanied by email authorization by the supervising faculty member or a signed hard copy. *All fields must be completed. If an item does not apply to this project, write in: n/a. Questions? Call 243-6672.*

#### 1. Administrative Information

Project Title: <b>Socialization and Volunteers: A Training Program for Volunteers at Nonprofit Organizations</b>	
Principal Investigator: <b>Allison McGovern Sullivan</b>	UM Position: <b>Graduate Student</b>
Department: <b>Communication Studies</b>	Office location: <b>LA 339</b>
Work Phone:	Cell Phone: <b>201 575 2828</b>

#### 2. Human Subjects Protection Training *(All researchers, including faculty supervisors for student projects, must have completed a self-study course on protection of human research subjects within the last three years (<http://www.umt.edu/research/complianceinfo/IRB/>) and be able to supply the "Certificate(s) of Completion" upon request. If you need to add rows for more people, contact the IRB office for assistance.)*

All Research Team Members (list yourself first)	PI	CO-PI	Faculty Supervisor	Research Assistant	DATE COMPLETED Human Subjects Protection Course
Name: <b>Allison Sullivan</b> Email: <b>allison.mcgovern@umontana.edu</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	3/15/2014 ✓
Name: <b>Betsy Bach</b> Email: <b>betsy.bach@umontana.edu</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4/05/2014 ✓
Name: Email:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Name: Email:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

#### 3. Project Funding *(If federally funded, you must submit a copy of the abstract or Statement of Work.)*

Is grant application currently under review at a grant funding agency? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <i>(If yes, cite sponsor on ICF if applicable)</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No		Has grant proposal received approval and funding? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <i>(If yes, cite sponsor on ICF if applicable)</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	
Agency	Grant No.	Start Date	End Date
			PI on grant

#### IRB Determination:

For UM-IRB Use Only

- ☒ Not Human Subjects Research  
☒ Approved by Exempt Review, Category # 2 w/ICF *(see memo)*  
☐ Approved by Expedited Review, Category # \_\_\_\_\_ *(see Note to PI)*  
☐ Full IRB Determination  
     ☐ Approved *(see Note to PI)*  
     ☐ Conditional Approval *(see memo)* - IRB Chair Signature/Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
     ☐ Conditions Met *(see Note to PI)*  
     ☐ Resubmit Proposal *(see memo)*  
     ☐ Disapproved *(see memo)*

**Note to PI:** Non-exempt studies are approved for one year only. Use any attached IRB-approved forms (signed/dated) as "masters" when preparing copies. If continuing beyond the expiration date, a continuation report must be submitted. Notify the IRB if any significant changes or unanticipated events occur. When the study is completed, a closure report must be submitted. Failure to follow these directions constitutes non-compliance with UM policy.

Risk Level: Minimal

Final Approval by IRB Chair/Manager: [Signature] Date: 3/9/2015 Expires: None



## SUBJECT INFORMATION AND INFORMED CONSENT

**Study Title:** Socialization and Volunteers: Implications for Volunteer Identification

**Investigator:** Student: Allison Sullivan, the University of Montana, 32 Campus Drive  
Missoula, MT 59812 Cell: (201) 575-2828

Faculty Supervisor: Betsy Bach, Communication Studies, the University  
of Montana, Phone: (406) 243-6119

**Purpose:** You are being asked to take part in a research study where we are investigating volunteers in nonprofit organizations and what factors contribute to their socialization into the organization. The results will be used for a Professional Paper and the final paper may be submitted for presentation at a communication conference. The organization you volunteer for will not receive the results. You must be 18 or older to participate in this research.

**Procedures:** If you agree to be a part of the focus group, and thus take part in this research study, you will be asked a series of questions pertaining to your volunteer experiences, along with turning points that impacted your likelihood of continuing to volunteer with the nonprofit. The focus group will last for roughly thirty to forty-five minutes.

**Risks/Discomforts:** We do not anticipate risks or discomforts associated with this study; although, minimal risks may be associated with discussing volunteer experiences and dislikes may trigger bad memories, which may cause some discomfort.

**Benefits:** Your cooperation with this study will help shed light on what factors of organizational socialization contribute to a volunteer's organizational commitment.

**Confidentiality:** Your records will be kept confidential and will not be released without your consent, except as required by law. Your privacy will be protected by removing identifying information from transcribed information and through the use of pseudonyms in published and presented works. Quotations will be labeled according to the individual's title, not their name. Your participation in this study will remain confidential, and only myself, and potentially my advisor, Betsy Bach, will have access to the focus group recording. The recording of the focus group will be transcribed. Upon evaluation of research findings, the transcription will be erased. If the results of this study are published or presented, your name or initials will not be used.

**Voluntary Participation/Withdrawal:** Your decision to take part in this research study is completely voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time.

**Questions:** If you have any questions now, or during the interview, please do not hesitate to ask. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research subject, you may contact the Chair of the IRB through The University of Montana Research Office at (406) 243-6672.

<b>The University of Montana IRB</b>	
Expiration Date	<u>None</u>
Date Approved	<u>3-9-2015</u>
Chair/Admin	<u>Betsy Bach</u>

**Statement of Your Consent:** I have read the above description of this research study. I have been informed of the risks and benefits involved, and all my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. Furthermore, I have been assured that Allison will also answer any future questions I may have. I voluntarily agree to take part in this study. I understand I will receive a copy of this consent form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Subject

\_\_\_\_\_  
Subject's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Statement of Consent to be Audio Recorded:** I understand that audio recordings may be taken during the study. I therefore consent to being audio recorded during the focus group process. I understand that if audio recordings are used for presentations of any kind, names or other identifying information will not be associated with them. I understand that audio recordings will be destroyed following transcription, and that no identifying information will be included in the transcription.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Subject's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

<b>The University of Montana IRB</b>	
Expiration Date	<u>None</u>
Date Approved	<u>3-9-2015</u>
Chair/Admin	<u>Paul A. O'Brien</u>

## **Appendix B**

### **Opening Observations/General Questions:**

- Gender- should be observable
- What is your age?
- What is your occupation? Are you a student? Do you work full-time or part-time?

### **Focus Group Questions:**

#### **Functional Questions:**

1. When did you start volunteering?
2. How often do you volunteer typically?
3. Where do you usually volunteer?
4. What prompted you to volunteer with that organization?

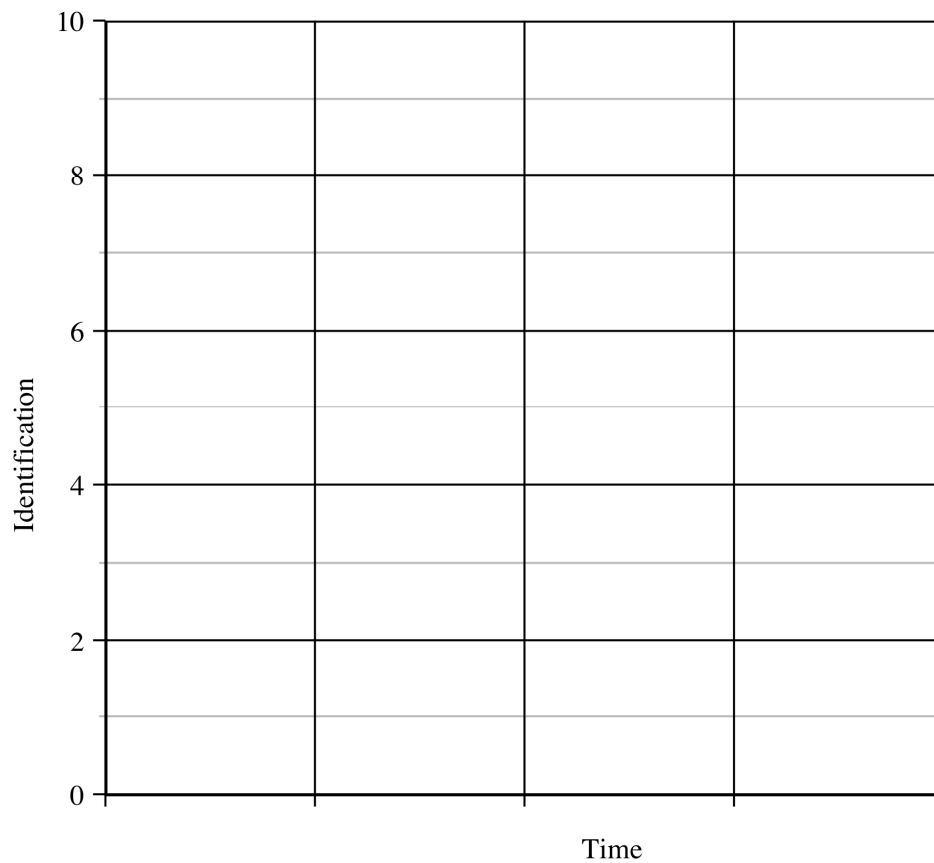
### **Timeline**

5. What was your first impression of the organization you volunteer with?
6. What experiences have you had, positive or negative, over the course of volunteering with your organization?

#### **Identification**

7. Who in the organization have helped you learn the ropes? What did they do and say to help you?
8. Who in the organization has made you feel less a part of it? What did they do or say that made you feel that way?
9. How do you feel about the other volunteers?
10. Would you plot on this graph experiences that you had that were turning points that made you feel like you had a sense of membership, belonging or commonality with the organization and others in it, please explain why. (Further directions will be given to participants to clarify any confusion)

Identification Graph



### Socialization

11. What elements of your volunteer training, if any, helped you feel more a part of the organization?
12. When did you begin to feel as though you were a part of the organization? Why?
13. How did you learn your volunteer role?
14. What responsibilities do you have now that you did not have when you started? When did you begin to get those responsibilities?
15. What other thoughts you have concerning the nonprofit you volunteer for?

## **Appendix C**

### **Opening Observations/General Questions:**

- Gender- should be observable
- What is your age?
- What is your occupation? Are you a student? Do you work full-time or part-time?

### **Focus Group Questions:**

#### **Functional Questions:**

16. When did you start managing volunteers?
17. How many volunteers do you oversee?
18. How often do you typically interact with the volunteers you manage?
19. What nonprofit organization do you manage volunteers for?
20. What prompted you to become a volunteer manager/coordinator?

#### **Timeline**

21. What was your first impression of the volunteers you work with?
22. What experiences have you had, positive or negative, over the course of volunteer managing/coordinating with your organization?

#### **Identification**

23. What aspects of the organization do you think have helped your volunteers feel more a part of it?
24. What aspects of the organization do you think have made your volunteers feel less a part of it?

#### **Socialization**

25. What elements do you think contribute to helping your volunteers feel a part of the organization?
26. When do you tend to notice volunteers beginning to feel as though they are a part of the organization? Why?
27. How do you help individuals learn their volunteer role?
28. What responsibilities do you give volunteers over time that you do not give them when they are just starting? When do your volunteers begin to get those responsibilities?
29. Are there any other thoughts you have concerning the volunteers you manage/coordinate?

## Appendix D

Time	Content	Methods	Resources
2:00 PM		<b>Introduction of Trainer</b>	1. PowerPoint Slides 1 and 2 2. Pass out participant guide
2:05 PM		<b>Group Discussion</b>  1. Ask trainees to get into groups of 2 to 3 people 2. Have them share their answers to the three questions on the PowerPoint slide.	1. PowerPoint slide 3
2:20 PM	Intro to Socialization-What is it? 1. What happens when we socialize volunteers? 2. If we are not effective in socializing volunteers, retention of volunteers can be a struggle Ways You Already Socialize Volunteers 1. Volunteer training 2. Giving feedback 3. Increased responsibilities over time Areas to Improve Socializing of Volunteers 1. Volunteer environment 2. Volunteer recognition 3. Clear and consistent communication of expectations	<b>Mini Lecture</b>	1. PowerPoint slides 4, 5, 6 and 7
2:30 PM		<b>Role Playing</b>	1. PowerPoint slide 8

<p>2:45 PM</p>	<p>Elements of a Supportive Environment</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Names are known</li> <li>2. There are no dumb questions</li> <li>3. People are approachable</li> <li>4. Encouragement is offered</li> <li>5. Recognition of work is abundant</li> </ol> <p>How to Clearly Communicate Expectations</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Model of Communication</li> <li>2. What happens when we communicate to someone?</li> <li>3. If we are not effective senders, the messages can get lost</li> </ol> <p>Barriers to Communication</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To deliver a message effectively you need to break down barriers in the communication process</li> <li>2. Know your audience</li> <li>3. Does your volunteer have enough information to understand your expectations?</li> </ol> <p>Effective Communication Includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The 7 C's</li> <li>2. Being a good listener</li> <li>3. Non verbal behavior</li> </ol> <p>The 7 C's to Communication</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Clear</li> <li>2. Concise</li> </ol>	<p><b>Mini Lecture</b></p>	<p>1. PowerPoint slides 9, 10 and 11</p>
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3:05 PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Concrete</li> <li>4. Correct</li> <li>5. Coherent</li> <li>6. Complete</li> <li>7. Courteous</li> </ul>	<p><b>Group Discussion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ask trainees to get into a different group of two to three individuals</li> <li>2. Have trainees answer the three questions on PowerPoint slide 12</li> <li>3. Have one large group discussion once the smaller groups have had time to answer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. PowerPoint slide 12</li> </ul>
3:20 PM		<p><b>Break</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Offer a question and answer time concerning the lecture and group discussion</li> <li>2. Encourage trainees to enjoy snacks and drinks and use restrooms.</li> </ul>
3:25		<p><b>Role Play</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. PowerPoint slide 13</li> </ul>
3:40		<p><b>Debrief</b> Get group together and ask them:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What was hard about these activities?</li> <li>2. What was helpful?</li> <li>3. What are your main takeaways from this training?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. PowerPoint Slides 14 and 15</li> </ul>
3:50		<p><b>Follow up Questionnaire</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pass out a follow up questionnaire</li> <li>2. Have trainees fill out and hand in as they are leaving</li> </ul>	
4:00			



		End	
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## Appendix E

Using the following scales (there are four scales for each item), evaluate the training class you just completed. Circle the number for each scale that best represents your feelings.

The socialization methods recommended in this training program were:

Bad	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Good
Worthless	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Valuable
Unfair	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Fair
Negative	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Positive

The content or subject matter of this training program was:

Bad	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Good
Worthless	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Valuable
Unfair	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Fair
Negative	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Positive

The trainer was

Bad	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Good
Worthless	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Valuable
Unfair	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Fair
Negative	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Positive

In real-life situations and on the job, your likelihood of actually attempting to use the socialization methods developed in this training program is:

Unlikely	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Likely
Impossible	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Possible
Improbable	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Probable
Would not	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Would

Your Likelihood of wanting to take another training program related to this topic is:

Unlikely	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Likely
Impossible	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Possible
Improbable	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Probable
Would not	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Would

